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MONTANA LABOR MARKET

Monthly Review of
EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK, LABOR SUPPLY, LABOR DEMAND, CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

MONTANA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
Division of Unemployment Compensation Commission of Montana

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PRESIDENT

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Mitchell Building — P. O. Box 1728 — Helena, Montana

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Heavier Than Normal Dip From Aug. Employment

September employment in Montana's nonfarm industry is estimated at 175,500 wage-earners in compilations of the Commission in cooperation with the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, a decline of 1,300 from the August level and of 1,400 from September of a year ago. This compares with a normal dip of from 300 to 600 in September employment from that of August, a seasonal turn premonitory of fall and winter payroll curtailment.

Confirms Earlier Trend

Levels shown in the latest figures confirm the trend developed over the past four months. June saw the upward march of employment totals halted after 29 months of consistent seasonally adjusted gains. In July a resurgence appeared, only to be snuffed out when August failed by 700 count to equal the August total of the year before. Now September shows a slightly greater dip from its corresponding month a year ago.

Mining, Lumber Crews Decline

Mining employment more than accounts for the total difference from last September, with a 2,100 deficit accompanying the force reductions occasioned by a faltering copper and other metals market. Lumber and timber, likewise afflicted by unwilling markets, reduced its employment by 400 from a year ago, food processing is down 300 from last year, to make a total manufacturing group decline of 500 after primary metal processing added a minor 200. Transportation, principally in the interstate railroad segment, registered a dip of 600, and contract construction is an insignificant 200 below last September. Trade also has a downward fluctuation of 100, out of nearly 44,000 workers.

Gains in Several Groups

Partially offsetting these losses from last September are the 800 increase in service industry employment; 200 up in the stable class of finance, real estate and insurance; and 1,100 more on the government payrolls, about equally divided between federal and local.

Reflects Seasonal Aspects

Seasonal aspects of the current estimates find the largest numerical August to September change in wholesale and retail trade, down 700. Service industries show 300 less in employment, transportation and utilities 200 fewer, and the finance group down a scant 100. Manufacturing group is 200 down, all in the lumber and logging section. The only increase is in government, where school maintenence staffs were activated for the school term. Mining and contract construction had the same employment in September as in August.

MONTANA'S JOBSEEKER SURPLUS CONTINUES DOUBLE NORMAL LEVEL THROUGH SEPT.

Increase of 450 jobseekers in September over August gives a hint of unfavorable employment conditions that may be expected to prevail through the coming fall and winter months. September applicant files of Montana's employment service offices contained 6,328 active jobseekers as compared with 5,872 a month earlier and with 2,889 a year ago. Significantly, it is the largest increase, August to September, in the last nine years.

Tenth Successive Month of Surplus

Also significant is that this year's surplus labor supply at the beginning of October is double the average of the same period in nine years. It even exceeds by 2,805 the accumulation at the end of September in 1949, when the nation and state were experiencing what has been termed an inventory adjustment period. September is the tenth successive month in which the labor surplus has been substantially above that of the corresponding month a year before.

Jobs Constant, Available Workers More Numerous

Gross totals of industrial employment in the state during the same periods have exceeded or held close to year-ago figures, indicating that number of jobs has remained about constant, while number of available workers has steadily increased. Average employment during 1950 is pegged at 147,000, advancing year by year to 166,700 average for 1956. Average unemployment in 1951, 1952, and 1953 was around 6,000, in 1956 it was 7,200, advancing in 1957 so far to 10,000.

Work-Applicant Count in Review

	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951
February	16,695	13,061	12,304	12,455	10,995	10,136	12,336
April	12,066	7,974	9,227	8,945	6,043	5,705	7,048
June	7,943	4,694	5,274	5,043	3,919	2,957	4,240
August	5,872	2,808	2,458	3,519	2,069	1,619	2,370
September	6,328	2,889	2,781	3,782	2,288	1,388	2,304
October	7,000*	3,763	3,348	4,038	2,688	1,955	2,572
Decmber		10,325	9,351	8,613	7,932	7,517	6,694

*Estimate

Mining and Lumbering Still Lag

Metal mining, and lumbering, are two industries contributing heavily to the current high level of unemployment. In both instances the root of the employment decline is in market for the products. A slow demand, and lowered price levels, reacts directly on payrolls. Several thousand miners have been idled as a result, and the logging and lumbering industry has lagged behind its usual seasonal recovering of employment levels after a normal winter lay-off.

Construction Lacking in New Projects

Demand for construction workers has been about normal through the summer and during September, though reports indicate that virtually no large new projects are being launched. The danger is that construction demand may falter as present projects reach completion, with no new contracts to which to turn. Some of the current projects will extend into or through 1958, others are approaching completion this fall and winter.

Current Construction At Good Pace

Work is continuing on construction of several dams for power purposes, on a power plant utilizing low grade coal, building new and expanding other airbase facilities, installing two or more radar stations, school and commercial buildings, on scattered residential construction, and on the substantial program of state highway improvement. Some of these contracts will continue into 1958 or longer, but construction employment will diminish unless new projects are evolved.

Highway Activity to Increase

Highway prospects are not threatened with dim-out, as new contracts are in the making on an increasing rather than diminishing scale. Inauguration of the interstate highway system of super-highways crossing the state east and west and also north and south next year, has added to the normal reconstruction program in that field.

Near Year-Ago Level

Employment on state highway projects and maintenance in September was 1,800 about 200 fewer than in September a year ago and down 250 from August. A year ago the decline from August to September was 350. Work was in progress last month on 235 miles of road contracts and on bridges to cost $5,091,000.

Two Seasonal Operations Begin

Labor market influences during October and November will include employment of more than 1,000 operatives in the four sugar refining plants in the state. This run is from October 1 through a period of from six weeks to three months. The annual Christmas tree harvest, giving employment to 800 or 1,000 persons in the timbered sections of the state, is also getting under way, and will conclude in early December.

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Along the Hiring Line—Field Summary, Oct. 1

ANACONDA, Deer Lodge, Philipsburg—(179 jobseekers, 118 new; 104 men, 75 women) Labor demand continues light in industrial circles, farm hiring was brisk during potato harvest, with some labor brought in for picking. Smelter hiring very limited, crew of around 4,000 reduced by 175 in September, through departure of students and normal separations. Trade and service hiring is down because of sag in smelter payrolls. Migratory labor growing scarce.

BILLINGS, Columbus, Hardin, Hysham, Laurel, Red Lodge, Roundup—(865 jobseekers, 547 new; 541 men, 324 women) Construction employment in September held to August level, though no new starts were recorded. Main jobs on new court house and hospital buildings are reaching enclosed stage, so work will continue on them through severe weather. Other outside work is curtailing in expectation of winter conditions. No September hiring on railroad, 55 of extra gang laid off. Two beet sugar plants about staffed for season run starting in early October. Fewer transients than normal.

BOZEMAN, Ennis, Three Forks, Trident—(233 jobseekers, 200 new; 116 men, 117 women). Unfavorable weather slowed hiring for construction and other outdoor work in September; potato harvest was delayed two weeks and faces possible shortage of manpower in early October. New classroom and office building at college begun, local labor supply adequate. Full crews continue on city water main installation, road job and bridge contract near finish.

BUTTE, Virginia City, Whitehall—(1,597 jobseekers, 535 new; 1,291 men, 306 women) Terminations continue to filter in from the mining field, with no replacements at present. Reduction includes skilled miners, helpers, craftsmen, shift bosses, and timekeepers. General economy of the community reacts with lesser employment in trade and service establishments, some stores on half-day schedule. Construction employment somewhat brighter, as available skilled builders were occupied in seasonal repair and maintenance work, no big projects currently operating.

CUT BANK—(67 jobseekers, 62 new; 49 men, 18 women) Construction hiring was more active in September, for remodeling of park hotels, a road job, and fall repair work. Railroad track work also furnished some employment demand. Harvest was finished earlier than normal, with less hiring. Family workers and exchange of help reduced demand for outside help. Some inmigrants arriving from mining areas.

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Employment—	Sept. 1957	Aug. 1957	Sept. 1956	Sept Avg. 1950-1956
Industrial Employment	175,500	176,800	176,900	161,900
New Job Applications	3,775	4,033	3,020	2,571
Job Applications, End of Month	6,328	5,872	2,889	2,573
Insured Unemployment—	**Oct. 4 1957**	**Sept. 6 1957**	**Oct. 5 1956**	**Avg. 1st Oct. Wk. 1950-1956**
New and Renewal Claims	808	576	274	263
Unemployed Weeks Filed	3,047	2,756	717	943
Total Unemployment Claims	3,855	3,332	799	1,206

DILLON—(82 jobseekers, 69 new; 49 men, 33 women) Outdoor work halted by early September storm but has resumed at full force. Work on the new truck by-pass is nearly finished, as is the power line, Bannack to Wisdom, and the oiling and reconstruction of two streets. Magnesium mill at Glen being readied for operation in October. City water plant improvements begun. Residence building is at low ebb, tight credit. Farm labor demand is reduced to normal level.

GLASGOW, Fort Peck, Malta, Opheim—(88 job seekers, 132 new; 41 men, 47 women). Employment at the airport on its several construction contracts rose to 670, seasonal high in Septetmber, though still 200 below last year. Work started on 200 new housing units, shortage of qualified construction men was relieved through adjacent area recruitment. Full crews continue on telephone building, a business block, and many residence units downtown; street paving nearly finished, will release 70 workers.

GLENDIVE, Circle, Wibaux—(55 jobseekers, 104 new; 26 men, 29 women) Hiring for oil field work and in trade circles was brisk in September, better crops also resulted in more farm hiring. Construction still on moderate level, but no surplus of building skills. Three road projects for resurfacing, and city street work, all fully staffed. Railroad is releasing some shop and maintenance workers. Fewer migratory applicants than normal for this season.

GREAT FALLS, Choteau, Fort Benton, Stanford—(654 jobseekers, 466 new; 388 men, 266 women). Labor supply nearly double from year ago. Hiring is slow at the smelter, virtually no replacements. Airbase to reduce by 40 civilian employees in October and street paving project nears its finish. Work on the power dam continues with full crews. Miscellaneous construction and repair projects are continued, will end with arrival of winter.

HAMILTON, Stevensville—(130 jobseekers, 76 new; 91 men, 39 women) Withdrawal of students from working positions reduced supply of surplus labor here. Construction hiring increased with start of three road projects, and another mill was activated at the fluorspar workings near Darby. Christmas tree help is being recruited, also for sugar factory at Missoula. Apple harvest requirements reduced by small crop.

HAVRE, Chinook, Harlem—(63 jobseekers, 77 new; 31 men, 32 women). Fewer transients and fewer applicants in industrial occupations in September. Increased hiring for railroad extra gangs during the month. Farm harvests completed earlier than normal, farm demand now reduced. Most construction projects slated to finish in October, no new ones in sight. Beet harvest is using about 75 men.

HELENA, Boulder, Garrison, Townsend, White Sulphur Springs—(293 jobseekers, 304 new; 214 men, 79 women) All employment activity slowed in September, except for replacement of students leaving for classrooms. Forest fire demand fell away as storms reduced fire danger. In-migration of surplus miners from other areas noted. Reconstruction jobs on streets being rushed with full crews.

KALISPELL, Columbia Falls, Eureka, Libby, Whitefish—(607 jobseekers, 182 new; 404 men, 203 women) Labor demand in September was below that of August, and about the same as in September, 1956. Construction hiring remained firm as most projects were put under pressure for fall completion. Lumber and logging demand was steady with respect to this season, but below that of 1956 and most previous years. The timber interests are expecting the usual seasonal decline to begin in November.

LEWISTOWN, Harlowton, Ryegate, Winnett—(83 jobseekers, 53 new; 48 men, 35 women) Construction jobs are all fully staffed and are scheduled to continue until weather intervenes. Radar station is principal project. Some curtailment is in evidence first of October. Farm hiring, with better crops, was stronger than year ago, season closing.

LIVINGSTON, Big Timber—(106 jobseekers, 91 new, 74 men, 32 women) Labor

EIGHT YEARS OF MONTANA INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT TOTALS, BY MONTHS (in Thousands)

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Aver.
1950	133.2	132.2	135.2	142.1	147.3	153.6	154.9	157.1	156.8	152.2	150.7	148.8	147.0
1951	141.9	139.4	140.3	145.9	149.4	154.1	153.5	154.6	154.3	152.4	151.7	150.6	149.0
1952	140.5	140.7	143.0	149.7	154.8	159.9	159.5	161.2	160.4	157.9	156.0	154.9	153.2
1953	145.8	144.5	146.3	149.7	153.1	158.0	158.5	160.6	160.3	159.6	157.6	156.4	154.2
1954	146.7	145.5	147.2	151.1	155.7	161.6	164.1	165.4	154.8	153.9	158.2	155.7	155.0
1955	148.4	146.8	147.4	153.4	158.4	166.8	168.2	170.4	169.8	165.9	162.4	160.3	159.8
1956	154.3	152.1	154.2	160.7	167.0	175.0	175.7	177.5	176.9	173.6	167.9	165.2	166.7
1957	159.0	157.8	158.6	163.0	168.6	174.8	176.9	176.8	175.5				

Along the Hiring Line—Field Summary, Oct. 1

(Continued from Page Two)

supply adequate, and beginning to build up. Construction continuing on principal projects but no new ones starting. Two bridges nearly completed, telephone building well along and road job fully staffed. Park service has closed its season, some construction continuing until halted by weather. Railroad shops calling back a few of mechanical crew. Extra gang still on the track. Logging and sawmill operation at full capacity.

MILES CITY, Baker, Broadus, Ekalaka, Forsyth, Jordan, Terry—(74 jobseekers, 64 new; 46 men, 28 women). Labor demand heavy during the first part of September, halted by adverse weather; month ended on slow note, below year ago. No new projects starting, beet harvest has begun, other farm operations are routine and require but little hiring. Transient supply is scarce.

MISSOULA, Drummond, Arlee, Superior—(696 jobseekers, 358 new; 519 men, 177 women) Flurry of replacements required as students left to go back to classrooms. Sugar refinery prepared to start season run in early October, for six weeks. New pulp mill nearly complete, will be in operation soon. Some progress reported on bridge contracts, demand limited. Other construction proceeding with full crews. Lumber operations are still slow; about 15 laid off because of fire damaging the plant; lumbermen expect better season next year. Railroads increased track maintenenance crews.

POLSON—(147 jobseekers, 56 new; 127 men, 20 women). Labor supply continues at high level but low in demand. Lumber and logging failed to reach usual summer peak, beginning to recede for winter. Hiring in progress for Christmas tree harvest. Several road projects being pushed, with full crews.

SHELBY, Chester, Conrad—(69 jobseekers, 89 new; 47 men, 22 women). Construction at seasonal peak at close of September. Hospital additions and school additions and a number of residences and repair jobs were under way. Three railroad extra gangs at work in the area.

SIDNEY—(60 jobseekers, 77 new; 37 men, 23 women) Principal labor demand through September and into October was for construction. Student withdrawals created some openings during the month. Power plant construction proceeded with a crew of 150. Sugar plant opens October 3 with a big tonnage ahead, using about 300 workers.

THOMPSON FALLS, Hot Springs—(116 jobseekers, 70 new; 70 men, 46 women) Employment at the Noxon dam sagged from its 1,375 August peak with completion of several road and bridge contracts, and rail re-locations. Carpenters in demand for forms on the dam itself, now under way. Logging employment increased in September, several crews added to timber force.

WOLF POINT, Plentywood, Scobey—(64 jobseekers, 45 new; 41 men, 23 women) Increase in construction employment, and replacement of students returning to classrooms, kept the local labor market fairly in balance. In process are a street and curbing project, overpass, warehouse, and two new highway jobs. Residence construction lags.

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT IN NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN MONTANA (1)

(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)

INDUSTRY	EMPLOYMENT			Net Change	
	Sept. 1957 (2)	Aug. 1957 (3)	Sept. 1956	Aug. '57 to Sep. '57	Sep. '56 to Sep. '57
NONAGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES	175,500	176,800	176,900	—1,300	—1,400
Manufacturing	22,000	22,200	22,500	— 200	— 500
Durable goods	14,600	14,800	14,800	— 200	— 200
Lumber and timber products	8,300	8,500	8,700	— 200	— 400
Primary metals	5,000	5,000	4,800	00	200
Other (4)	1,300	1,300	1,300	00	00
Nondurable goods	7,400	7,400	7,700	00	— 300
Food and kindred products	3,700	3,600	4,000	100	— 300
Printing and publishing	1,600	1,600	1,600	00	00
Petroleum refining	1,100	1,200	1,200	— 100	— 100
Other (5)	1,000	1,000	900	00	100
Mining	10,700	10,700	12,800	00	—2,100
Metal mining	6,900	6,900	8,800	00	—1,900
Coal, quarrying and nonmetallic	900	900	1,000	00	— 100
Petroleum-natural gas production	2,900	2,900	3,000	00	— 100
Contract Construction	15,200	15,200	15,400	00	— 200
Contractors, building construction	5,500	5,600	5,600	— 100	— 100
Contractors, other than building	4,900	4,900	5,600	00	— 700
Contractors, special trade	4,800	4,700	4,200	100	600
Transportation and utilities	22,100	22,300	22,700	— 200	— 600
Interstate railroads	12,000	12,200	12,500	— 200	— 500
Transportation except railroads	3,900	3,900	4,200	00	— 300
Utilities including communication	6,200	6,200	6,000	00	200
Trade	43,500	44,200	43,600	— 700	— 100
Wholesale trade	9,700	9,800	9,700	— 100	00
Retail trade	33,800	34,400	33,900	— 600	— 100
General merchandise and apparel	6,100	6,200	6,400	— 100	— 300
Food stores	4,800	4,800	5,100	00	— 300
Eating and drinking establishments	9,400	9,800	8,800	— 400	600
Automotive and filling stations	6,700	6,800	6,500	— 100	200
Retail trade not elsewhere classified	6,800	6,800	7,100	00	— 300
Finance, insurance and real estate	5,900	6,000	5,700	— 100	200
Services and miscellaneous	23,400	23,700	22,600	— 300	800
Hotels, rooming houses, camps, etc	4,100	4,500	3,900	— 400	200
Personal services	2,600	2,600	2,500	00	100
Other (6)	16,700	16,600	16,200	100	500
Government	32,700	32,500	31,600	200	1,100
Federal	8,700	9,100	8,100	— 400	600
State and local	24,000	23,400	23,500	600	500
Great Falls Area (Cascade County)	20,800	21,200	20,700	— 400	100
Manufacturing	3,000	3,100	3,100	— 100	— 100
Contract construction	2,200	2,400	2,300	— 200	— 100
Transportation and utilities	2,500	2,500	2,500	00	00
Trade, wholesale and retail	6,500	6,700	6,300	— 200	200
Services and miscellaneous (7)	4,200	4,100	4,000	100	200
Government	2,400	2,400	2,500	00	— 100

(1) Estimates include all full and part-time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay during the pay period ending nearest the 15th of the month. Proprietors, firm members, personnel of the armed forces, domestic servants, and self-employed persons are excluded.

(2) Preliminary estimates based on return from samples of 666 selected Montana establishments.

(3) Figures previously released have been revised on return from 1,423 such establishments.

(4) Includes fabricated metal products, machinery except electrical, furniture, stone and clay products.

(5) Includes apparel, chemicals, and miscellaneous manufacturing products.

(6) Includes commercial trade schools, auto repair services and garages, miscellaneous repair services and hand trades, motion pictures, amusements and recreation, medical and health, law offices and professional services, nonprofit membership organizations and business not otherwise classified.

(7) Same as (6) above, also includes finance, real estate and mining.

COMPARISON OF BASIC LABOR MARKET TRANSACTIONS IN SEPT., 1957 AND SEPT., 1956

Employment Service Office	New Job Applicants				Jobseekers in File				Job Placements								U. I. Claims Wk. 10-4	
	Sept. 1957		Sept. 1956		Sept. 1957		Sept. 1956		Sept. 1957				Sept. 1956					
	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	1957	1956
Anaconda	118	35	33	7	179	52	54	12	23	127	150	48	29	117	146	33	* 92	21
Billings	547	153	612	251	865	233	536	166	420	827	1,247	509	577	949	1,526	430	334	169
Bozeman	200	40	82	22	233	48	147	40	187	111	298	85	242	272	514	157	30	24
Butte	535	186	334	113	1,597	573	269	36	98	84	182	31	186	9	195	87	1,245	119
Cut Bank	62	23	61	38	67	24	45	14	99	62	161	91	51	348	399	173	52	23
Dillon	69	21	42	18	82	18	34	12	65	99	164	101	56	90	146	76	50	7
Glasgow	132	37	94	35	88	11	56	5	218	165	383	86	202	428	630	144	29	12
Glendive	104	38	92	29	55	11	32	6	129	118	247	114	117	71	188	78	14	11
Great Falls	466	131	366	99	654	174	355	89	325	378	703	197	392	596	988	264	444	145
Hamilton	76	12	51	15	130	36	149	31	33	72	105	30	37	143	180	22	65	22
Havre	77	20	79	24	63	16	52	12	305	133	438	186	277	435	712	316	47	22
Helena	304	118	227	100	293	87	138	42	165	43	208	115	194	63	257	120	121	66
Kalispell	182	53	237	67	607	170	300	69	246	25	271	96	260	33	293	124	406	69
Lewistown	53	17	42	4	83	17	60	4	53	51	104	39	64	36	100	37	40	27
Livingston	91	30	63	20	106	32	36	12	87	44	131	48	104	27	131	53	73	26
Miles City	64	24	108	32	74	21	90	11	85	33	118	54	99	66	165	71	39	23
Missoula	358	133	238	89	696	242	322	91	187	35	222	101	313	80	393	178	380	77
Polson	56	16	72	24	147	53	92	24	36	8	44	12	63	14	77	30	173	46
Shelby	89	37	52	17	69	23	17	2	163	125	288	97	165	274	439	149	50	15
Sidney	77	14	33	8	60	10	22	3	65	38	103	24	67	58	125	44	18	9
Thomp. Falls	70	19	51	20	116	25	40	10	82	4	86	38	65		65	34	127	36
Wolf Point	45	20	51	20	64	25	43	12	47	24	71	25	52	109	161	68	26	22
TOTALS	3,775	1,177	3,020	1,052	6,328	1,901	2,889	703	3,118	2,606	5,724	2,127	3,612	4,218	7,830	2,688	3,855	991

*Includes 92 claims of Federal Employees UC Program, 41 same a year ago.

AVERAGE HOURS AND EARNINGS IN SELECTED MONTANA INDUSTRIES

(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)
(Hours and earnings data exclude administrative and salaried personnel)

INDUSTRY	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	Sep. (1) 1957	Aug. (2) 1957	Sept. 1956	Sep. (1) 1957	Aug. (2) 1957	Sept. 1956	Sep. (1) 1957	Aug. (2) 1957	Sept. 1956
All Manufacturing	$87.00	$86.66	$91.61	39.1	39.1	40.4	$2.22	$2.22	$2.27
Durable goods	85.23	85.04	93.79	39.1	39.1	41.0	2.18	2.18	2.29
Primary metals	86.56	86.77	102.51	37.8	37.8	43.9	2.29	2.30	2.33
Nondurable goods	90.92	90.30	86.95	39.2	39.1	39.2	2.32	2.31	2.22
Food and kindred products	74.85	77.25	69.82	40.3	41.2	39.1	1.86	1.88	1.79
All Mining	97.20	97.46	108.92	38.7	38.8	42.8	2.51	2.51	2.55
Metal mining	93.48	93.55	109.41	38.0	38.1	43.3	2.46	2.46	2.53
Transportation and Utilities (except railrds.)	91.84	92.34	86.80						
Transportation (except railroads)	113.69	117.17	105.92						
Utilities and communication	81.43	81.00	76.39	40.4	40.3	40.1	2.02	2.01	1.91

(1) Preliminary estimates. (2) Figures previously released have been revised on more complete returns.

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